The Theosophical FORUM

NOVEMBER 1902

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* * *

First God, second the world, third man; the world because of man, but man because of God.

The life of man is carried on in this way: the mind in the reason, the reason in the soul, the soul in the breath, the breath in the body.

And this (the mediating element between the Soul and the Father) is the administration of the universe, dependent from the nature of the One and pervading it through the mind of the One. .....This is the good Daimon. Blessed the soul which is fullest of this; unfortunate the soul which is void of this.

Draw to thyself and it will come; wish and it becomes. Lay to rest the senses of the body and it will be the generation of the Deity.

Knowest thou not that thou hast been born God, and son of the One, which also am I?

But the worship of God is one: not to be evil.

Hermes Trismegistus.

YUGAS AND KALPAS.

The following is an article written for the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM by the late Thomas Willson. When it was first received the editor abstained from publishing it, fearing the division of time on which Mr. Willson based his speculations did not exist in any ancient work of India. Yet having found nothing either to confirm or to dissipate these fears, and at the same time thinking Mr. Willson's speculations highly suggestive, the editor now submits the article to the judgment of the readers.

A great deal of unmerited ridicule has been cast by the thoughtless at the enormous periods of time in the Hindu chronicles; but this only because they did not take the trouble to go behind the "dead letter" of the text.

If any one will take the table given on page 73 of the *Secret Doctrine,* and look at it for a moment as he would at any rebus, he cannot fail to notice that a "Day of Brahma" is merely one hundred thousand of our ordinary days. A "Year of Brahma" is 360 of the Brahma "Days," or 36,000,000 ordinary days, while an "Age of Brahma" is one hundred times more, or 10,000,000 years.

Take a common ordinary day, just the every day of commerce, yesterday, to-day, or to-morrow. As a day and night it contains 86,400 seconds, and as a day it has one-half, or 43,200—the "Maha-Yuga" is given a length of one hundred times as many years.

The whole table is built up on the seconds in a day, and is intended, as it says, for exoteric teaching of the yugas and kalpas of the circles. It has this purpose, or some other of a cognate kind—it certainly can have no relation to actual chronology. To confine it to the letter of the text is simply to make it an object of derision. The use of the ordinary day and multiplication of its seconds by 100, and 100,000, is too apparent for controversy.

A maha-yuga contains 4,320,000 years. An ordinary day contains 43,200 seconds. The number of seconds was not enough and they were multiplied by 100.

As it takes 71 maha-yugas to make a manu, then the manu contains 7,100 days, or 3,550 days and nights, or ten lunar years.

A manvantara is a little longer than a manu. It is equal to

one manu (3,550 days and nights) plus one krita-yuga, which is .4 of a maha-yuga, or 40 days, or 20 days and nights; so that a manvantara (7,140 days or 3,570 days and nights) is nothing more than ten years of 357 days and nights each—the number of seconds in the one being exactly equal to the number of years in the other.

86,400x357x10 equal.....308,448,000 seconds.
One manvantara equal.....308,448,000 years.

This is hardly coincidence.

The calendar on the yuga side is one of days; on the manvantara side is one of lunar years of 355 days, the Satya Yuga being put in to bring the two into harmony, through the Kalpa.

40 days, or 1,728,000 sec. make....1 krita yuga of 1,728,000 years.
30 days, or 1,296,000 sec. make.....1 treta yuga of 1,296,000 years.
20 days, or 864,000 sec. make.....1 dvapara yuga of 864,000 years.
10 days, or 432,000 sec. make.....1 kali yuga of 432,000 years.
100 days, or 4,320,000 sec. make...1 maha yuga of 4,320,000 years.
100,000 days make.....1,000 mahayugas, or 1 kalpa.
100,000 days and nights make.....1 day and night of Brahma.
36,000,000 days and nights make.....1 year of Brahma.
3,600,000,000 days and nights make.....1 age of Brahma.

An Age of Brahma, or 10,000,000 years, is the base line of Hindu chronology, as far as it goes.

To go back to the manvantara. It contains 308,448,000 seconds or years.

14 manvantaras contain.....4,318,272,000.
1 Kalpa contains .....4,320,000,000.

The difference is one Krita-yuga, of 1,728,000, which must be added to the manvantara to make the kalpa.

Now try it another way. In "days,"

14 manvantaras contain ..... 99,960.
1 Kalpa contains .....100,000.

The difference is 40 days, or 1 Krita-yuga.

The Krita-yuga is a "magic" number. In all Eastern work the circle is represented by 12. The "word" for it usually stands for 12, as in the first verse of Genesis where both the word for earth and the word for heaven are 12. Adam means 144, or the product of the earth by the heavens, while Garden of Eden equals 1,728, or the Cube of 12. This constant use of the magic number

to "correct" the work shows that the figures are abstract, not concrete, and that the ciphers do not count. It gives us a key, in the numbers 4, 3, 2, 1, which added make ten, to *something*. What that something is we should find out.

It is not chronology. That is certain. It may have value in work on the "circles," and there is no harm in trying.

The circle of a day is twelve hours.

Its Krita-yuga contains 17,280 sec., or 4 h. 48 m.

Its Treta-yuga contains 12,960 sec., or 3 h. 36 m.

Its Dwapara-yuga contains 8,640 sec., or 2 h. 24 m.

Its Kali-yuga contains 4,320 sec., or 1 h. 12 m.

This is the decimal division of the whole table, with square and triangle, the 4, 3, 2, 1, all worked in approved shape. The day was made to fit it, for it is the union of the duodecimal and decimal systems, through 4321.

There are no circles of 100 days, except historical. The next circle to the day is the month.

Its Krita-yuga contains 944,233 sec., or 262,28 h.

Its Treta-yuga contains 708,175 sec., or 196,71 h.

Its Dwapara-yuga contains 472,116 sec., or 131,14 h.

Its Kali-yuga contains 236,058 sec., or 65,58 h.

In the circle of the year the division will be as follows, counting in days and nights of a 365 day year:

Krita-yuga—146.1 days.

Treta-yuga—109.575 days.

Dwapara-yuga—73.05 days.

Kali-yuga—36.525 days.

If there is an hour in each day that is Kali for the earth, and two whole days in each month Kali for the moon, and 36 whole days Kali for the sun, then for at least two days in each year there will be an hour when the three Kalis coincide, and all mankind will be under a triple pull.

This opens up a whole ocean of speculation and research.

MAN'S RELATIONS TO ANIMALS.

III.

Having compared the Animal and Human constitutions, and having surveyed the historical relations of Man to the Animals, let us glance at what may be called his present ethical relations with them.

Every animal species, it is taught changes with each new Race. (II, 737). This is not surprising if we remember that the beings inhabiting this earth are not isolated entities, but are all interdependent and are continually acting and re-acting on one another. Man is still one of Nature's Agents for the evolution of the Animals.

The unbreakable chain of being stretches upward to Deity: downward through the Animal world. Above Man there is a Race of beings who, having long since finished their evolution through the human stage, stand to us as our Helpers, Protectors and Teachers—our Elder Brothers. They remain with this Earth to aid Man, as the Law permits, in evolving his Divine nature.

As those lofty beings, next in the scale to ourselves, are to us, so are we to the beings next below us, the Animals. (I, 288). Ages ago some of the Divine Ones incarnated amongst men, taught them their arts and sciences and revealed to them the great spiritual truths which are concerned with Man's higher nature and further progress. When those Divine Teachers have risen to higher worlds than ours, the elect of our humanity will take their places. And the next great evolutionary period will witness the Men of our own cycle becoming the Spiritual Instructors of a Mankind whose Monads are now in the Animal Kingdom. We shall help them as we ourselves were helped. (I, 287-8). And in the meantime, as there is no break in the continuity of Nature, the Animals, as animals, have still to progress through Man. We have *now* exactly the same relative responsibility to the Animals as the Divine Teachers have to us; though as the principle of reason has not developed to any extent in our Younger Brothers, the methods in which the help must be given differ.

But the ignorance of Man of what vitally concerns him is vast and so he carries out his duties to the Animals, or, more fre-

quently, betrays his trust, unconsciously. A great deal of human action is unconscious. Just as in a man's own body various processes go on independently of his will, and, if he is healthy, of his consciousness—such as digestion, the circulation of the blood, etc.,—so the process of helping or hindering the Animal evolution goes on, to a very large extent, independently of his consciousness and his volition, but not independently of the effects of his desires, thoughts and actions.

In the phrase "unconscious betrayal" of Man's duty to his Younger Brothers, I do not of course include the habitual torture and murder of Animals done by Man. That *conscious* betrayal is another matter and requires separate treatment, resulting as it does from Man's selfishness and pride. But apart from this and speaking generally, the evolution of the Animals is aided or hindered by Man through two principal activities.

In the first place that circulation of living substance, made of minute Lives, already referred to, still goes on. These Lives are constantly entering and leaving the human form. When they leave they are attracted to such objects and beings as they have affinity to. That affinity is imparted to them by the Man in whose body they last functioned, through the spiritual, mental, psychic, passional, emotional, and sensational activities which were proceeding during the time they formed part of his vesture.

Amongst other beings they fly off to the Animals and are taken up and absorbed by their bodies, remaining therein for a longer or shorter period. In due course they are driven off again with the original impress accentuated by their sojourn and they return to the Man who gave them off, bringing with them what they have gathered during their cycle of transmigration. They are absorbed by the body he uses in his next life on earth.

So we may imagine that the Lives thrown off by a Man who gives way to anger would naturally be attracted to a ferocious Animal, thus imparting to it a large portion of the very energy which supplies that Animal's ferocity. On the other hand the Lives of a gentle and serene Man would go to the mild and gentle Animals. In each case they would return with the tendency to ferocity, or gentleness, etc. accentuated. It will thus be seen that we still supply the Animals with an important factor in their bodily make-

up, and that we are constantly interchanging, not bodily forms, but living bodily material with them. This is the real meaning of transmigration. It is not the human being who incarnates in the form of a lower Animal: but a portion of his human substance, which he himself is not using for the time being, is used by other entities, especially the Animals.

In the second place there are the entities known to Esoteric Science as Elementals, which swarm in the earth's atmosphere and in the other elements. These beings are forces rather than bodies. They have no form of their own, but are extremely sensitive to psychic impressions, both high and low, good and bad. They take on the shape of the thought. Every thought of Man as it is evolved coalesces with an Elemental. These entities are constant-being projected by Man; and some of them, like the Lives before spoken of, go to the Animals, and assist or retard their inner and consequently outer development.

Summing up the relations of Man to Animals we see therefore:

1. That, spiritually, Man and Animals are brother Pilgrims journeying through the Cycle of Necessity—Man being some little way ahead in the great procession.

2. That, physically, Man is at present himself an Animal, albeit a spoilt one.

3. That, mentally, there is an abyss between the two Races which will not be spanned by the Animal Monads for ages to come.

4. That Man has provided the Animals with their *bodily forms* and to a large extent with the *substance* of their bodies.

5. That Man stands as the Evolver of the Animal Kingdom, this being a trust committed to him by Nature.

6. That Man is at the present time carrying out that trust (or otherwise) unconsciously by the means described.

7. That in the distant future Man will aid the *mental* development of the Animals, as his own mental development was aided by beings higher than himself.

And what are we to say as to the practical outcome of it all? I could say a good deal as to what I think our ideal conduct towards our Brothers, the Animals, should be, having regard to these our relations with them. But I am not going to say anything at all on that subject. Conduct is a matter for individual determination

and, in any case, all I would like to say has been said much better than I could say it by one of the best of humanitarian writers, Mr. H. S. Salt, Secretary of the Humanitarian League, in his book, "Animals' Rights."

So far as physical action is concerned, I can see no ethical difference between our relations to the animal bodies of Animal Monads and the animal bodies of Human Monads. Killing, for instance, is equally murder in both cases. Torture is equally criminal. I can see no ethical difference between enslaving an Animal and enslaving a Man. So far as spiritual action is concerned, both Man and Animal are immortal beings, and the ethical relations of the Immortals are the same, irrespective of the nature of the mortal elements in their vestures.

But I would not ask anyone to accept this view, which is merely my own interpretation of the teaching. All I would venture to suggest to those who consider that the relations of Man to the Animals have been correctly described: to those who by their membership in the Theosophical Society are pledged to form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood without distinction of RACE: to those whose hearts would thrill in response to every cry and thought of all that lives and breathes: is this: When we are brought into contact with our Brothers, the Animals, in our daily lives—whether in the form of a portion of a slain Brother on our dinner plates (procured for us with the infliction of agonies past belief), or adorning any part of our persons (from head to foot), or in the form of a living Brother wearily dragging our omnibus or tramcar, our carriage or other vehicle, or (most ghastly of all) in the form of medical or psychological knowledge (?) gained by the fiendish torture of these, our Brothers and Wards—that we should honestly and with open minds consider for ourselves how far we are faithful to the trust reposed in us; how far we are approximating to our Ideal; how far we are really forming a nucleus of *Universal* Brotherhood. And in like manner when we are giving way to those deadly sins, which need no enumeration, that we should consider what loathsome form of Animal we are thereby dooming a spiritual being, as Immortal as ourselves, to occupy. And having thus honestly and with open minds considered these questions that we should let our answers become a vital factor in our lives.

ARJUNA'S BELIEFS.

In Vedic India there were two quite distinct beliefs as to death and the soul's future destiny; the one belief belonging to the Vedic Hymns, and the other to the Upanishads, and especially to Rajput sages like King Pravâhana, son of Jibala, with whom it was a secret traditional teaching. The belief of the Hymns, which we may call the belief of the Brahmans, was intimately bound up with the ritual that evolved the Yajur and Sama Vedas out of the materials of the Rig Veda. For, according to this belief, a man's hopes of heaven depended above all things on his fulfilment of the ritual, "the works of the law," as Paul would call it; and his stay there depended on the fulfilment of the same ritual by his sons and his sons' sons, in unbroken line. Failing issue, or failing the due performance of ritual by his descendants, a man was, as Jaratkâru's Fathers said, pitifully suspended over the pit of hell, and the great rat, Time, would duly gnaw through his last support, letting him fall head-downwards into the pit.

It is for the purposes of this belief that the Shrâddha is celebrated to this day all over India; balls of food and water being offered to the deceased ancestors of the sacrificer, or to the "Fathers," or *manes* in general. The Shrâddha, says a high authority, "is especially performed for a parent recently deceased, or for three paternal ancestors, and is supposed necessary to secure the ascent and residence of the souls of the deceased in a world appropriated to the *manes*....The proper seasons for the worship of the *manes* collectively are the dark fourth night, the day of the new moon, &c. The presentation of the ball of food to the deceased, and to his progenitors in both lines is the office of the nearest male relative, *and is the test and title of his claim to the inheritance.*" So that the ritual, Brahmanical belief, which springs from the Vedic Hymns is the orthodox official belief of India to-day, the belief which underlies the rights of property and inheritance.

The other belief, quite irreconcilable with this, is the spiritual belief of the Upanishads, with its doctrine of an eternal self, immortal through its own inherent nature, and therefore requiring no nutriment of cakes and water to secure it in heavenly bliss; this self being perfected in self-knowledge through a chain of births;

or, as we might say, the doctrine of reincarnation and Nirvâna. This spiritual teaching, according to the clear language of the Upanishads, is the hereditary doctrine of the Rajputs, the warrior Kshattriyas, as opposed to the Brahmanical priests with their belief in the efficacy of ritual. Having regard to what I have written before in these columns and elsewhere, I may say that it is practically certain that the spiritual belief in reincarnation and Nirvâna is the traditional religion of the red Rajputs, while the ritual belief embodies in the offerings to the *manes* is the religion of the white race that forms the nucleus of the Brahmans, from whom it has gradually spread over the whole Hindu community.

It is interesting to see the conflict of these two beliefs throughout the whole of Indian history. The Upanishads are full of this conflict, as I propose one day to show. The last great episode in the strife was the mission of Prince Sidhârtha, the Rajput, who is known to fame as Gautama Buddha and Shakya Muni. By the irony of fate the doctrines of reincarnation and Nirvâna, which we are accustomed to consider as characteristic of the last great Rajput, Buddha, found their way into the accepted beliefs of those very Brahmans who drove Buddha's followers from India, and are now held by them as an esoteric belief, as, for example, in the teaching of Shankarâchârya, who is almost as unsparing towards the "works of the law" as any teacher in the Upanishads. The Brahmans received their esoteric teachings from the Rajputs, and the two greatest Upanishads mark the very moment of their reception of that teaching which "had never before gone to any Brahmin, but was in all lands the teaching of the Kshattriya alone."

This teaching was reasserted for the last time by the Rajput Buddha; before him, it had been urged with vehement eloquence by another great Kshattriya, esteemed, as Buddha was, a divine incarnation. The tradition of this pre-Buddhistic revival is contained in the "Songs of the Master," the famous "Bhagavad Gitâ." The ritual belief seems to have gained the ascendancy, in spite of the denunciations of the Upanishads; and in the Bhagavad Gitâ, this ritual belief is represented by Arjuna the Pandu Prince.

We find Arjuna, towards the beginning of the book, declaring his beliefs in this way:—

"In the destruction of family, the immemorial family rites

perish; when the rites perish, the whole family becomes riteless.

When they become riteless, Krishna, the women of the family, go astray; when the women go astray, a mingling of colour is born.

This mingling brings to hell the family and the slayers of the family; their fathers fall, deprived of the offerings of cake and water.

Through the sins of those who slay families, thus causing a mingling of colour, the perpetual caste rites and birth rites are lost.

Of men whose family rites are lost, there is a protracted dwelling in hell—thus we have heard the tradition handed down."

The ideas to be noted in this creed of Arjuna are that "when the family rites perish, the fathers fall, deprived of the offerings of cake and water;" and that this leads to "a protracted dwelling in hell"—exactly the belief so vividly set forward in the story of Jaratkârû, exactly the belief of the Rig Veda Hymns. What does the divine Avatara say to this belief?

"Krishna answered him, smiling as it were, descendant of Bharata; speaking this word to him, desponding there between the two armies.

[The Master speaks:] 'Thou grievest for things not worthy of grief, and speakest words of wisdom! The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living.

For verily there was no time when I was not, when thou and these Princes were not; nor will there ever be a time when all of us shall cease to be.

As the lord of the body in this body meets boyhood, youth and age, in like manner he obtains another body; the wise man is not mistaken about this.

He who thinks the self slays or is slain; both these discern not; the self neither slays nor is slain."

Here, to make the matter quite certain, we have the teaching of the self and of rebirth crowned by a quotation from the Upanishads; and nearly the whole of this second chapter has its origin in the same source.

In the fourth chapter we have a few lines of transcendant interest, when Krishna speaks of the origin of his teaching:—"This eternal teaching of union with the self I declared to the Sun [the head of the Solar race of Rajputs], the sun declared it to Manu

[the Kshattriya, as all Indian tradition calls him]; Manu declared it to Ikshvaku [the first King of the Solar line, from whom Buddha traced his descent]. Thus handed down in sequence the Râjanya [or Rajput] sages came to know it; but in the long course of time this teaching was lost.

This is the same teaching that I tell thee to-day, for thou art my beloved companion, and this is the supreme esoteric love."

Arjuna says:—"Thy birth was later, Master, the Sun's birth was earlier, how am I to understand this,—that thou hast declared it at the first?"

Krishna says:—"Many are my past births, and thine too, Arjuna; I know them all; thou knowest them not."

There is a quite remarkable likeness between this answer and the answer of another teacher to a like question:—"Before Abraham was, I am." One cannot say for certain whether this answer implies the same idea of re-birth that Krishna teaches, but one may say that it looks at least very probable. But this subject is too large to enter on now.

So that the Bhagavad Gîtâ confirms quite remarkably what we have said about the two religions of Vedic India; the one the ritual religion which taught the doctrine of a heaven to be gained "by the works of the law," and to be retained only by the fulfilment of the same "works of the law" by a man's descendants, failing which fulfilment, the "Fathers fall into the pit, their supply of funeral cakes and water being cut off," to quote the words of Arjuna. Contrasted with this is the belief of the great Rajput race of the Solar progenitor, the Kshattriya Manu, and the first Rajput King Ikshvaku, as Krishna himself calls it; the teaching which was handed down by the Rajput sages in sequence, and which the Kshattriya Krishna is commissioned to declare to the world once more; the first recipient of his teaching being a Kshattriya like himself, and not a Brahmin. The words "thus the Rajput sages knew [this most excellent esoteric teaching] handed down in sequence" may serve as an eloquent gloss on the already quoted words of the Upanishad:—"Hitherto this teaching came not to any Brahmin, but was in all lands the teaching of the Kshattriya alone."

THE MAGICIANS OF ALASKA.

The following is an article translated from the Review of the Russian Church in America. The author, being a devoted dignitary of this Church in Alaska, can have no possible interest in painting things and people he describes whiter than they are, and seen in this light his narrative only gains in suggestiveness. Readers of the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, please, remember to compare this article with the article in our next number, which will chiefly consist of extracts from Mme. Blavatsky's "The Magicians of the Blue Hills."—*Editor.*

The truth of the common origin of most practices and beliefs of all the races, which inhabit distant and widely different parts of the world, finds more and more confirmations, with every day. Not so long ago, American newspapers announced the discovery of a Russian linguist, who finds an indubitable likeness between the language of a small Asiatic tribe, in the northeastern coast of Siberia, and the dialects of some American Indians. And now "The American Antiquarian" publishes an article by Mr. Charles Hallock, in which the author tries to solve the problem of the origin of the American Indians, on the basis of some archeological discoveries made in Mexico and other localities of the American continents, and comes to the conclusion, that the ancestors of the Mexicans were colonists from Asiatic Corea. Mr. Hallock and some other scientists have much to say in favor of this theory, but, in our opinion, the best witnesses, in this case, are the religious beliefs, and especially the cult of the so-called *Shamanism*, to which the Alaskan Indians still hold very strongly. The similarities between this Shamanism and the Shamanism, kept up by some inhabitants of the Russian Siberia, is simply striking.

In order to understand and appreciate the influence which Shamanism has on the life of savages, it is necessary not to lose sight of the circumstances and peculiar conditions, about which civilized man knows little and in which the aborigines of Alaska have their being.

A rough climate; mountain peaks eternally covered with snow;

the ever tumbling noizy northern sea, which washes the shores of the peninsula, with its innumerable little islands; impassable forests, which, it is true, are ever green, yet so inhospitable;—all this together breeds the love of the mysterious in the northern man, who possesses but few spiritual gifts. The cruel North grants you nothing without a struggle. And but little is given to man even if he does struggle. In truth, nothing is yielded but that, which is strictly necessary for man to enable him to lead the pitiful existence of a half animal, half reasonable being.

After this it is not to be wondered at, that the shamanical cult has preserved many wild rites and primitive notions, and that amongst the Indians of Alaska the belief in sorcerers and sorcery is developed more strongly than anywhere else. But strictly speaking this faith is dual. The Alaskans believe in the *icht,* or the good shaman, and they also believe in the *nuxzat,* the evil sorcerer, two people who ought never to be mistaken for one another, though both their activity and their character have much in common.

The Indians think that in order to become a shaman one must be born with certain peculiarities, which will be evident when the man is still in his earliest childhood. The future shaman is different from the other children even in his exterior, he shuns society, he likes to be alone, and he is often heard speaking to himself. Already in his babyhood, his hair naturally twists itself into little pig-tails, similar to those the grown-up shamans have. He dislikes comfort and pleasure. From a child he feeds only on the coarsest of foods and fears neither heat, nor cold. But the surest sign that a child is to grow into a shaman is that occasionally he sees spirits.

Yet besides natural gifts and an early inclination a man, in order to become a shaman, must use his will, as without constant effort the thing is not possible. Being a shaman means having at one's disposal a certain number of *ecks* or spirits, who appear, when the shaman performs certain rites and invocations, and obediently carry out his orders, helping the people the shaman wants to help, disclosing future events, and especially discovering the secrets of bad men, the foremost amongst whom are the *nuxzats,* or sorcerers.

The command over the *ecks* can be obtained only through complete isolation and exhausting abstinence. The man who has given

himself to this pursuit, hides himself on one of the lonely islands so abundant on the south coast of Alaska, which is cut up with endless creeks and channels. Here, surrounded by the stern mysteries of wild nature, the man begins his training. He is sheltered by giant pines and cedars, which for centuries have kept the sun from penetrating the green gloom under them. At times, uninterrupted rest reigns supreme here: the drowsy ocean murmurs softly, beating against the rocky shore: the green giants are also asleep, gently whispering with their prickly branches.

But when the blustering wind begins to walk over their old heads, they can creak, and crack and thunder in a way, which together with the sea waves booming against the rocks, drives any living being crazy with awe and fear. Birds and beasts alike tremble and shudder in their shelters, helpless and restless with anguish. The future shaman alone has no fear in his heart. In the howling storm and the noizes of ocean and forest, he hears the voices from the mysterious world he is trying to cognize. To him, this is the talk of the elements he wants to master and to use. And he firmly sets out to approach the mysterious lives through fasting and abstinence.

For days and even months the shaman has no other food but the bark of a certain prickly shrub, no other drink but the salt sea water. And the fasting must continue until gradually the *ecks* begin to appear to him and the shaman acquires the power to get ecstatic at will, calling forth any spirits he may need. This state is the first grade of shamanism. Henceforward, the man may hope to have the psychic and the physical forces of nature obey him. But the true work of a shaman is still beyond him. To do this he must own many other weapons of the shaman practice. Amongst such are counted the tongue of a badger, various masks, a rattle to attract the attention of the spirits, a cap trimmed with sables and a magic wand.

The tongue of a badger is especially difficult to get. Coming across a badger never was a rare occurence in Alaska; the difficulty is in the way the thing had to be done. There would be no magical properties in the animal's tongue were it to be shot or killed with a stick or a stone. Sighting a badger, the shaman has to stop short within a certain distance, and, never allowing the animal to come

any nearer, he has to shout *O* in three different tones, and to kill it by the mere sound of his voice. In the case of a truly powerful shaman, the badger falls on its back and expires, with its tongue out, at the first shout. And only when all these conditions are strictly observed the shaman can make use of the thing, carrying it till the end of his days on his breast.

The other requisites of shamanism are much easier to get. But the things that have already been used by several shamans are prized most highly, as the miraculous powers of the former owners are supposed to pass on to the new, together with the material objects.

A shaman must never cut his hair, and his locks frequently smeared with pine rosin, which dries very soon, make a sharp little noize when shaken, like strings of wooden bobins.

A chaste life is required from a shaman only whilst he is actually at work on some miracle, but still the ascetic shamans are held in greater respect, as the powers of the shaman entirely depend on his self-control and abstinence. The Indians believe that the spirits do not like self indulgent shamans and shun them, whereas if a shaman is truly ascetic in his life, they will follow him, even without any invocations on his part.

Armed with all the objects of his sacred calling and perfectly self-controlled, the shaman becomes a great power indeed, so great as to be able to oppose and counteract the evil doings of the black sorcerer.

The Indians of Alaska firmly believe that their *nuxzats,* the natural enemies of the shamans, can bring about epidemics, or cast spells over individuals, which will result in exhausting restlessness, in madness or in any other phsychic or physical evil. Exactly like changeling sorcerers of mediæval Europe, the Alaskan *nuxzats* prowl about in the shape of a hog or a black cat. They can also fly through the air, and their favorite resorts are cemeteries. They dig out the corpses and tear out their eyes, their hearts or any other part of the body, they may need in their sorcery. A corpse is the most necessary requisite for a sorcerer, because it supplies some powerful ingredients and also serves to hide objects over which spells have been cast.

The most usual way of ruining a man is to get a part of his food

or his clothing, or still better a lock of his hair or a nail recently cut from his hand or foot. Having obtained any of these things, the sorcerer places them into the corpse of a human being—in case none was to be had, an animal's would do,—and if the incantations, which are to work the charm are well said the man will surely be undone in the way desired. If it was a hair, through which the spell was cast, the man will have terrible headaches, if it was a part of his food, his stomach will go wrong, and in every case, as the corpse, in which the things were hidden, decays and is dispersed, so will decay and disperse the part of the victim's body to which they are related.

All this certainly reminds one of the ancient Russian belief that there exist evil people, who can cause the death of a man working through a piece of the sward with his foot-print on it or through his portrait.

Another way of harming a man in use in Alaska is a magic potion, cunningly mixed into his food or drink. And the cases when a man's death or illness are caused by his swallowing some filthy abomination—like a dried and powdered piece of a dead body, for instance—must be very frequent amongst the aborigenes. It is only natural to suppose, that the person who can cause a sickness, must also know how to cure it. And so in the life of the Alaskan Indians, a nuxzat is more than a sorcerer, he is also a doctor and in a way a spiritual adviser. No wonder the nuxzat is truly a formidable enemy of the shaman.

Both the *nuxzat* and the *icht* are equally great powers in the life of Alaskan Indians, but the *icht*, the good shaman, enjoys universal respect and veneration, whereas the very name of the former is a word of abuse and contempt in Alaska. Calling a man a *nuxzat* amounts to more than a mere insult; it also means accusing him of the meanest practices, the most evil underhand doings. And a man who was so insulted, must publicly prove the accusation was unjust. Otherwise, all the village, even to his nearest and dearest must shun him forever, according to custom.

Whenever the work of a sorcerer begins to be suspected in the sickness of a man, his family call a council and generally decide to have him examined by a shaman. In case the shaman is especially well famed and lives far, the sick man is sometimes carried by his

relatives for miles and miles. And there are numberless stories circulating in Alaska which illustrate the profound belief of the aborigenes into the miraculous, omnipotent healing powers of the shaman.

In our days there are not as many of them as formerly, before the Russian colonial government of Alaska and, later on, the American officials and officers began to oppose the shamans and to try to exterminate their practices. The captain of an American man-of-war, which was stationed in Sitka some time ago, was especially famous for his persecutions of the shamans. Hunting them was a regular sport of his. A captured shaman was brought to the ship, where the captain received him in a polite and even a friendly way, asking him questions about the number of the *ecks* which obey him, the nature of his powers, and so on. Then he declared he also was a very powerful shaman and proposed to measure powers. An electric battery was brought then and the *ecks* of the shaman were challenged to wrestle with the *ecks* of the battery, the shaman holding on to it with both hands. The result of all this was that the tribesmen of the magician saw him writhing in ridiculous and humiliating postures, that they heard him scream with pain, that he lost in dignity and prestige. Moreover, the shaman left the ship with a practical knowledge of the wondrous powers of his white rival, and generally he left it, with his wonder-working locks half shaven off his head, and the captain of the ship in possession of a promise from him that he will never take up the shaman practices any more.

This and similar occurrences in the intercourse of the white man and the Alaskan magician, have forced him to seek refuge in more isolated places, in the midst of wild nature and far from the dwellings of man. But the original belief of the Indians has not been destroyed, it has not even been shaken. Stories like the following, current in every village, bear witness to it.

Some sixty years ago there was a shaman, in the neighborhood of Echkom, who ordered his people to take him into the open sea, one beautiful morning, to wrap him well in a piece of strong cloth and to throw his body into the water. He was greatly beloved by his people and they naturally refused to do so. But he insisted, and at last, having tied around him the end of a very long piece

of leather, made of the skin of a magic badger, they dropped him overboard. He sank so swiftly, that they found it difficult to unwind the leather quick enough. At last the motion stopped, and, having tied the bladder of the same badger to the upper end of the piece of leather, just to indicate the exact spot where their kinsman found a watery grave, they went ashore to lament his death. During four days they came every morning and saw the floating bladder, and knew he was dead. But on the fifth they heard the sounds of a shaman's rattle and attracted by the noize they walked up a rock and discovered their wonderful relative on the top of it, his head hanging down, blood pouring from his throat, clouds of sea birds darting and shouting around him, and he himself cheerfully singing a shaman incantation.

Another shaman, who still lives, is firmly believed to have kept the small pox away from his native island, when the terrible epidemic was raging all over Alaska. A third possesses a wonderful gift of clairvoyance, and so on. Every shaman has some miraculous faculty more developed than the others, and the kind and the strength of the faculty depend on the kind and the strength of the spirits he has mastered, and also on the sort of the magic attributes he has secured.

Year after year, Christianity finds a firmer hold in Alaska, but the ancient cult of shamanism is far from extermination on the islands. And, though the shamans are much scarcer. than in olden times, we know of at least five or six of them, who have a great renown amongst their tribesmen and are believed to work wonders to-day, as hundreds of years ago.

"THE PAST."

We desire to call to the attention of our readers the latest book of M. Maurice Maeterlinck. It is called *Le Temple Enseveli,* (The Buried Temple), and consists of five essays: Justice, The Evolution of Mystery, The Reign of the Material, The Past, and Luck.

Among Western thinkers Maurice Maeterlinck presents a striking example of one who grows ever nearer to the Theosophic thought. For this reason the essays contained in "The Buried Temple" should be particularly acceptable to the readers of the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

The essay on "The Past" is perhaps the most remarkable. In this essay the true meaning of memories: their value and their danger, is set forth so practically, and with such delicacy of ideal insight, that we take pleasure in presenting the following extracts:

"Our past has no other mission but to have raised us up to where we are at the present moment, and to furnish us at this moment with the necessary weapons, necessary experience, thought and joy. If it should, at this precise moment, keep us back or take the least particle of our attention to itself, in spite of all its glory, it would become useless and it would have been better if it had not existed at all. If we allow it to interfere with a single gesture we were about to make, our death begins and the mansions of the future suddenly take the shape of sepulchres."

* * * *

"The past is past," we say; and this is not true; the past is always present. "We carry the weight of our past," we also affirm; and this also is not true; it is the past that carries our weight. "Nothing can rub the past out." And this again is not true; at the slightest sign of our will,the present and the future walk back through the past and rub out in it everything that we want them to rub out. "The indestructible, the irreparable, the immovable past." And this is not true, either. It is the present that is immovable and incapable of mending anything for those who talk like this. "My past is bad, it is sad, it is empty," we say to end with, "I can find in it not one moment of beauty, of happiness, or of love; I see nothing in it but ruins which are devoid of majesty." And all this is not true, because you see in it exactly what you put into it the very moment you look at it."

TO ALL OUR CONTRIBUTORS

IN THE SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL SENSE

Greeting!

"THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM" recently published a Notice, addressed to the authors of many unwritten articles, among its readers, praying them to get the said articles written down and sent to us. This request brought such good results, in the form of certain excellent contributions by quite new writers, that we are impelled to repeat our invitation. Good friends, no longer hide your talents in the napkin of the unmanifested, but precipitate them on paper, and give them to waiting humanity, through our pages. Be encouraged to tread in the path of the Sages who have gone before you! Let your inward revelations take body in the written word! Modesty is a beautiful virtue; so also is courage. Show that you are wise, by letting this word suffice.

Now to address our contributors in the material sense: "THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM" with every year grows firmer on its foundation, more able to stand alone. Its independent life grows and developes. A new milestone in its journey is passed, with this number. From henceforth, all subscriptions and donations are to be sent *to the Editor direct,* and no longer to four or five different addresses, in different cities. We hope soon to bring all subscriptions up to date, and, where subscribers have sent their contributions in the middle of a volume, we hope to send them notices asking for a supplementary subscription to carry their subscription forward to the beginning of a new volume. There are a good many among our readers whose subscriptions, like the articles alluded to above, still dwell in the unmanifested; these we shall ask to precipitate, to materialise. To all and sundry, we make the request that contributions, subscriptions, communications and sendings of whatever nature may in future be addressed to us direct; money being remitted by postal orders, payable to

The Editor,

THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM,

Flushing, N. Y.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

Founded by H. P. BLAVATSKY at New York in 1875.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once a universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create the nucleus of such a body. Many of its members believe that an acquaintance with the world's religions and philosophies will reveal, as the common and fundamental principle underlying these, that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the basis of true brotherhood; and many of them also believe that an appreciation of the finer forces of nature and man will still further emphasize the same idea.

The organization is wholly unsectarian, with no creed, dogma, nor personal authority to enforce or impose; neither is it to be held responsible for the opinions of its members, who are expected to accord to the beliefs of others that tolerance which they desire for their own.

The following proclamation was adopted at the Convention of the Society held at Boston, April, 1895:

"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* to tread in this."

There are no dues.

The expenses of the Theosophical Society in America are met by voluntary contributions, which should be sent to the Treasurer T. S. A., Box 1584, New York, N. Y.

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Secretary T. S. A., P. O. Box 1584, New York.